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## DOH-COLLIER ENCOURAGES SUN SAFETY DURING SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH *SUN'S UP, COVER UP!*



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**Naples, Fla. —** May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month and the Florida Department of Health in Collier County (DOH-Collier) is reminding residents and visitors the importance of protecting themselves from the sun.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the US. According to the American Academy of Dermatology, approximately 9,500 people are diagnosed with skin cancer in the US every day. Two common types of skin cancer, basal cell and squamous cell carcinoma, are curable. Melanoma is less common but is more dangerous and can sometimes result in death. These three types of skin cancer are mostly caused by overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays.

UV rays come from the sun, tanning beds, and sunlamps, which can penetrate your skin and result in changes to your skin cells. Too much exposure to UV rays can cause sunburn, changes to skin texture, premature aging of skin, and skin cancer.

The most common sign of skin cancer is a change in skin, such as a new mole, change in existing mole, or a sore that does not heal. The following signs can indicate melanoma:

- An irregularly shaped mole or spot;
- A mole or spot with uneven color;
- A mole that is larger than a pea; or
- Changes in an existing mole or spot.

There are many ways to reduce your risk of skin cancer. DOH-Collier recommends the following tips to stay sun safe while enjoying the Florida sunshine:

- Seek shade when the sun is strongest. This is typically between the hours of 10am and 4pm.
- Wear a broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15 on all parts of exposed skin before you go outside. Remember to reapply every two hours and after swimming or sweating.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat that shades your face, ears, and back of neck. Avoid straw hats that can let the sun through. If you wear a baseball cap, keep in mind that your ears and back of neck are exposed so be sure to apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 15 to protect these areas.

- Protect your eyes and the delicate skin around your eyes from sun exposure by wearing sunglasses. Wrap-around sunglasses are best as they block UV rays from sneaking in the sides.
- Wear light, long-sleeved shirts when possible. Keep in mind that normal T-shirts have a SPF rating lower than 15, and a wet T-shirt offers much less protection than a dry one, so wear other types of sun protection as well.

Protecting yourself from the sun is important year-round, especially in Florida. Parents should remain vigilant in making sure children avoid overexposure to the sun and sunburns. If you notice changes to your skin, it is important to contact your doctor. For more information about skin cancer and how you can reduce your risk visit <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/cancer/sunsup.html>.

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